



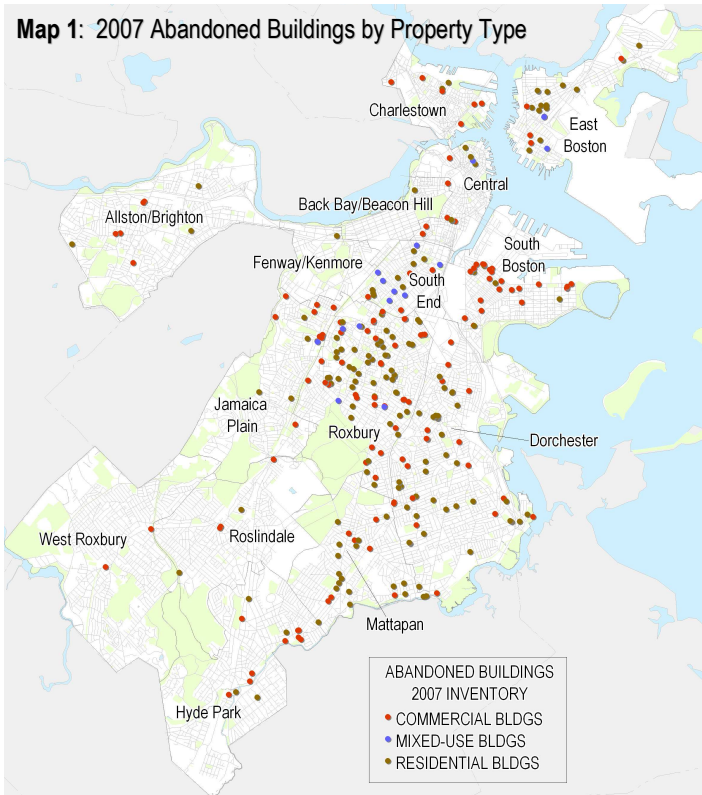
Trends 2007

Abandoned Buildings

CITY OF BOSTON/TOMAS M. MENINO, MAYOR

DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT EVELYN FRIEDMAN, CHIEF AND DIRECTOR

Map 1: 2007 Abandoned Buildings by Property Type



SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

In the 2007 abandoned buildings survey there was an overall decrease of residential, commercial and mixed-use abandoned buildings. This report covers findings from survey work completed in the Summer and Fall of 2007.

This year's survey is DND's eleventh annual survey. Since the survey began in 1997, the total number of abandoned buildings has decreased by 70%, from 1,044 to 310 buildings. The number of residential abandoned buildings has decreased by 80%, from 796 to 158 buildings. Commercial and mixed-use abandonment has decreased by 39%, from 248 buildings in 1997 to 152 buildings in 2007.

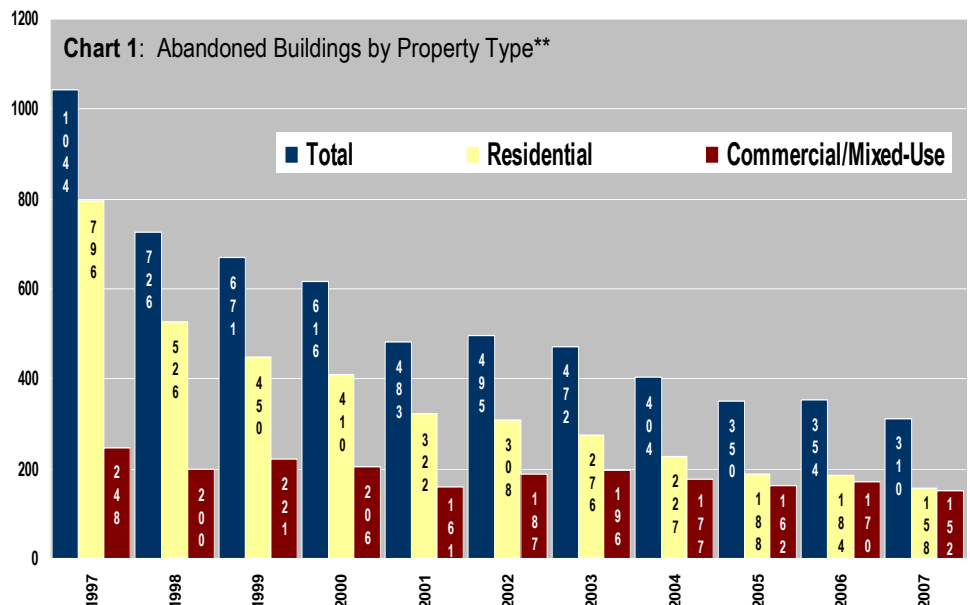
Since last year, the total number of abandoned buildings has decreased 12% from 354 buildings in 2006 to 310. Residential abandonment decreased by 14%, while commercial and mixed-use abandonment decreased by 11%.

63 of the 310 abandoned buildings in 2007 were newly added to the inventory, while 108 properties that appeared abandoned last year were renovated, demolished or are no longer abandoned.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS	1
METHODOLOGY	2
CHANGES IN INVENTORY	2
RESIDENTIAL ABANDONMENT	3-4
COMMERCIAL ABANDONMENT	5
INTRACTABLE PROPERTIES	6
TAX TITLE	6
MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE/REOS	7
CITY ABANDONMENT STRATEGY	8

Chart 1: Abandoned Buildings by Property Type**



**Chart includes exempt properties



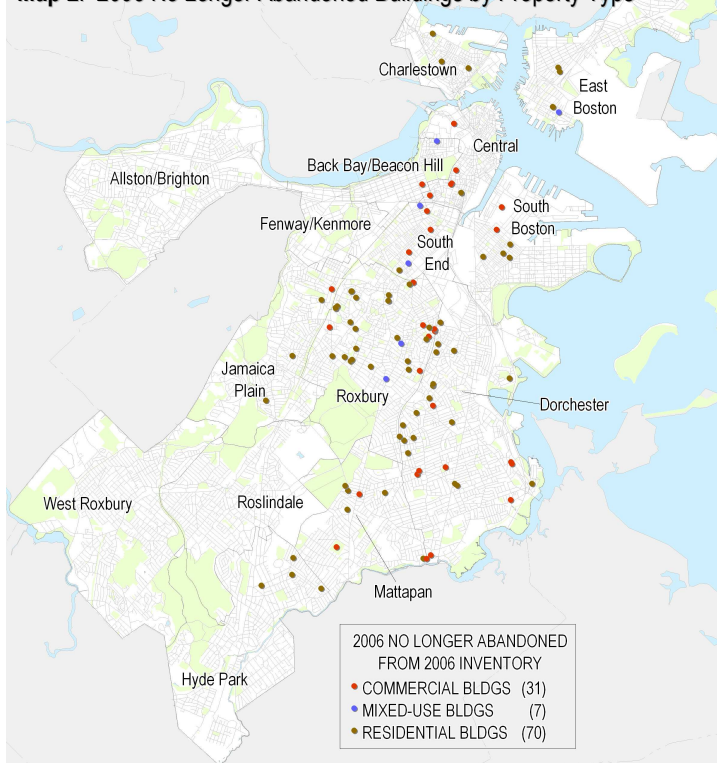
Trends 2007

Abandoned Buildings

CITY OF BOSTON/THOMAS M. MENINO, MAYOR

DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT EVELYN FRIEDMAN, CHIEF AND DIRECTOR

Map 2: 2006 No Longer Abandoned Buildings by Property Type



CHANGES IN INVENTORY

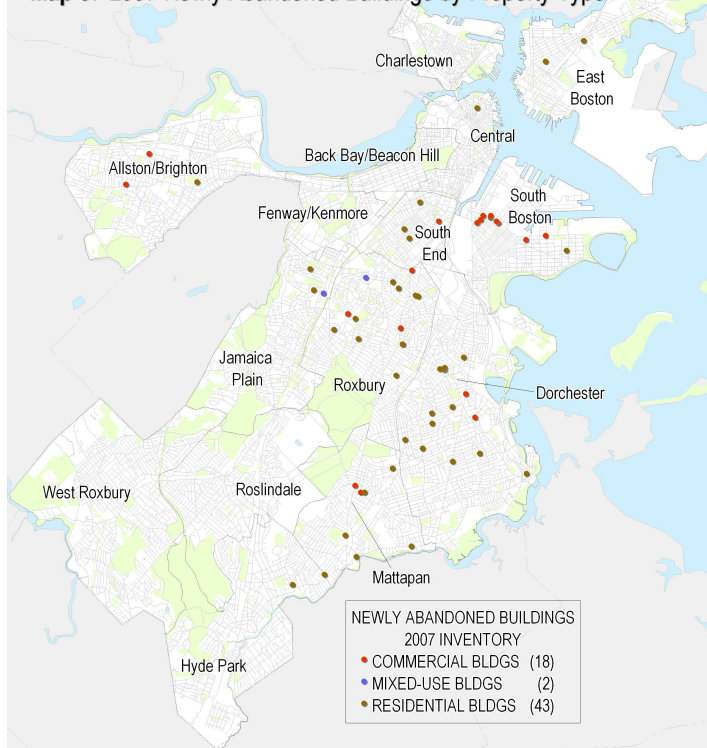
Map 2 shows the 108 buildings from the 2006 survey that were found to be no longer abandoned in the 2007 survey.

- 65% (70) were residential buildings.
- 29% (31) were commercial, and 6% (7) were mixed-use.

Map 3 shows the 63 buildings that were added to the abandoned building inventory in 2007.

- 68% (43) of the newly identified buildings were residential.
- 29% (18) were commercial, and 3% (2) were mixed-use.

Map 3: 2007 Newly Abandoned Buildings by Property Type



SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The abandoned building* survey is based on information gathered in previous surveys and data on buildings that are likely to be abandoned. A street by street survey is completed for most of the city, including a resurvey of previously identified buildings. This area includes 99% of the abandoned buildings identified from 1999 to 2007. A photo is taken of each property and a form is completed from a visual inspection of the exterior of the property for overall condition and rehab status. Data from the Assessing and Fire Departments are then used to enhance the street-by-street survey.

* An abandoned building is any residential, commercial, industrial or mixed-use building (excludes sheds and garages on residential property) which is not occupied and has visible signs of physical distress (boarded, burned, open to the elements, otherwise deteriorated, etc.). Property used for storage may be surveyed as abandoned if it is boarded or appears otherwise unoccupied.



Trends 2007

Abandoned Buildings

CITY OF BOSTON/TOMAS M. MENINO, MAYOR

DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT EVELYN FRIEDMAN, CHIEF AND DIRECTOR

Chart 2: Residential Abandoned Bldgs by Type, 1997

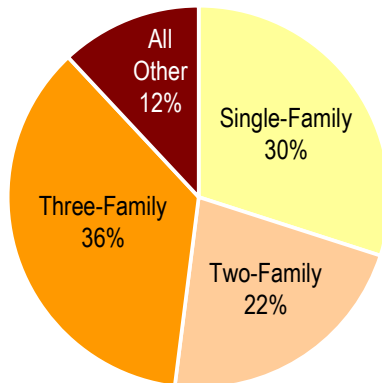
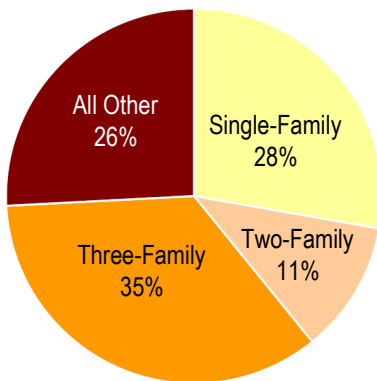


Chart 3: Residential Abandoned Bldgs by Type, 2007



TAX STATUS

From 1997 to 2007, the proportion of buildings that were publicly owned/tax exempted has fallen from 15% to 5%. The number of publicly-owned abandoned residential buildings has been reduced at a faster rate than privately-owned abandoned residential buildings (Charts 4 and 5).

The proportion of privately-owned residential buildings that owe taxes has increased from 16% of residential abandoned buildings to 25%. Although the percentage has increased, this is still a small percentage of private properties where the City can begin tax foreclosure takings. For the majority of private properties, the City has little leverage with property owners.

RESIDENTIAL ABANDONMENT

Charts 2 and 3 show the proportion of residential abandoned buildings in each unit size category (single-family, two-family, etc.) in 1997 when the survey began and in 2007.

The proportion of abandoned buildings in the "All Other" category, including tax exempt and multi-family properties, increased 4% from 2006 and increased 14% from 1997. The proportion of single- and two-family homes has decreased since 1997, reflecting more rehab activity of such properties. The percentage of three-family abandoned buildings has seen little change since 1997.

Chart 4: Residential Abandoned Bldgs Tax Status 1997

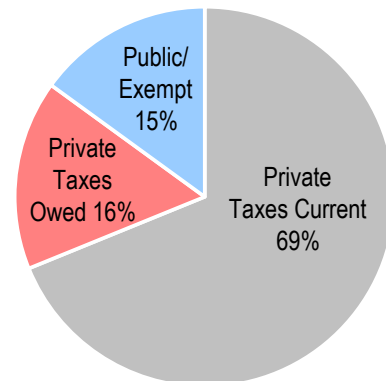
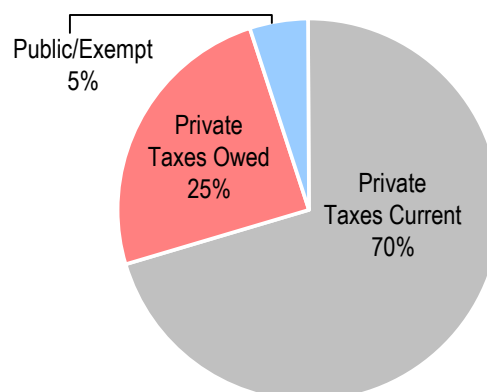


Chart 5: Residential Abandoned Bldgs Tax Status 2007





Trends 2007

Abandoned Buildings

CITY OF BOSTON/THOMAS M. MENINO, MAYOR

DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT EVELYN FRIEDMAN, CHIEF AND DIRECTOR

RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS BY NEIGHBORHOOD

From 1997 to 2007, there has been a 80% decrease in the number of abandoned residential buildings. In 1997, there were 796 abandoned residential properties while in 2007 there were 158 abandoned residential properties.

Roxbury, Dorchester, East Boston and Mattapan have the highest concentration of abandoned residential buildings. Together, the four neighborhoods comprise 76% of all residential abandoned buildings in 2007.

Roxbury continues to have the largest number of residential abandoned buildings (51), but the number is down dramatically since the beginning of the survey in 1997 (-83%). The number continued to drop, with a 20% decrease in residential abandonment from 2006 to 2007.

Dorchester has also seen a large decrease in abandoned residential buildings since 1997 (-77%), which continued to decrease by 9% from 2006 to 2007. Dorchester and Roxbury have seen the greatest reduction in volume of abandoned properties since 1997. In Dorchester, 127 residential properties have been removed from the inventory since 1997 while in Roxbury 256 residential properties have been removed.

Besides Dorchester and Roxbury, of neighborhoods which had 25 or more abandoned buildings in 1997, East Boston, Hyde Park, South End, Jamaica Plain, and Mattapan all had a decrease of 75% or greater from 1997 to 2007. These four neighborhoods have experienced the greatest percentage change in residential abandoned buildings since 1997.

Most neighborhoods experienced decreases in residential abandonment from 2006 to 2007, except the South End and Allston/Brighton. However, for both neighborhoods the volume was not substantial, one residential property in Allston/Brighton and two residential properties in the South End, respectively.

Chart 6

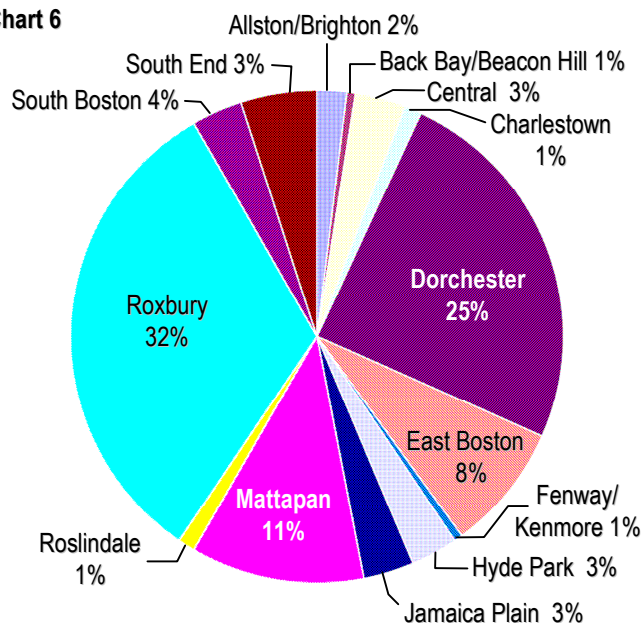


Table 1: Residential Abandoned Buildings by Neighborhood

Neighborhood	TOTAL BLDGS			%Change 97-07	2007 %Share
	1997	2006	2007		
Allston/Brighton	3	2	3	**	2%
Back Bay/Beacon Hill	2	1	1	**	1%
Central	14	6	5	-64%	3%
Charlestown	1	5	2	**	1%
Dorchester	166	43	39	-77%	25%
East Boston	52	15	13	-75%	8%
Fenway/Kenmore	1	1	1	**	1%
Hyde Park	44	6	5	-89%	3%
Jamaica Plain	37	6	5	-86%	3%
Mattapan	101	19	18	-82%	11%
Roslindale	11	3	2	-82%	1%
Roxbury	307	64	51	-83%	32%
South Boston	7	7	5	**	3%
South End	47	6	8	-83%	5%
West Roxbury	3	0	0	**	0%
TOTALS	796	184	158	-80%	-

** %Change not calculated for neighborhoods with less than 10 abandoned buildings in 1997.



Trends 2007

Abandoned Buildings

CITY OF BOSTON/THOMAS M. MENINO, MAYOR

DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT EVELYN FRIEDMAN, CHIEF AND DIRECTOR

Chart 7

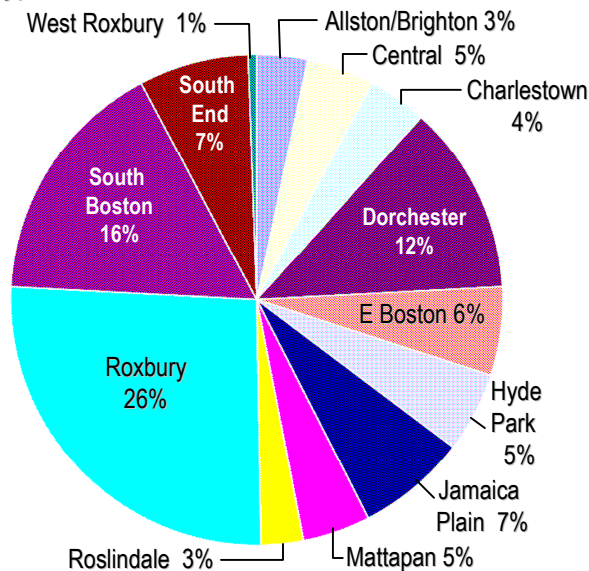


Table 2: Commercial/Mixed-Use Abandoned Bldgs by Neighborhood

Neighborhood	Counts			%Change 97-07	2007 %Share
	1997	2006	2007		
Allston/Brighton	5	3	5	**	3%
Back Bay/Beacon Hill	1	2	0	**	0%
Central	30	12	7	-77%	5%
Charlestown	0	6	6	**	4%
Dorchester	30	23	19	-37%	12%
East Boston	30	10	9	-70%	6%
Fenway/Kenmore	4	0	0	**	0%
Hyde Park	13	7	8	-38%	5%
Jamaica Plain	15	11	11	-27%	7%
Mattapan	13	9	7	-46%	5%
Roslindale	5	3	4	**	3%
Roxbury	77	49	40	-48%	26%
South Boston	2	18	24	**	16%
South End	22	15	11	-50%	7%
West Roxbury	1	2	1	**	1%
TOTALS	248	170	152	-39%	-11%

** %Change not calculated for neighborhoods with less than 10 abandoned buildings in 1997.

COMMERCIAL & MIXED-USE BUILDINGS BY NEIGHBORHOOD

The number of commercial and mixed-use abandoned buildings has decreased more slowly than residential abandonment; however, the total number of commercial and mixed-use abandoned buildings in 1997 was significantly smaller than residential buildings (248 compared to 796). From 1997 to 2007, there has been a 39% decrease in the number of commercial and mixed-use abandoned buildings, and a 11% decrease from 2006 to 2007.

Of neighborhoods which had 25 or more abandoned buildings in 1997, Central and East Boston saw the greatest percentage reductions in abandonment, 77% and 70% respectively. Roxbury has seen the greatest reduction of volume with 37 commercial and mixed-use buildings removed from the abandonment inventory. However, Roxbury also has had the largest volume of abandoned commercial and mixed-use buildings each year.

Often commercial and mixed-use buildings are more difficult to survey accurately compared to residential buildings, since buildings that are actively used as warehouses are often boarded up and may appear derelict and abandoned. This may be especially true in South Boston, where the increase from 2 to 24 buildings in abandonment since 1997 may be due to a more rigorous survey in an area where old industrial buildings are becoming obsolete and new residential development is underway or in initial planning phases.

From 2006 to 2007, the majority of the neighborhoods experienced a reduction or no change in abandonment and neighborhoods that increased or decreased, changed by very little in volume. In addition to South Boston, the commercial and mixed-use abandoned buildings inventory increased in Allston/Brighton, Roslindale and Hyde Park ranging from one to seven buildings. Overall, there was very little change in commercial and mixed-use building abandonment.



Trends 2007

Abandoned Buildings

CITY OF BOSTON/THOMAS M. MENINO, MAYOR

DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT EVELYN FRIEDMAN, CHIEF AND DIRECTOR

INTRACTABLE ABANDONMENT

Some abandoned buildings reappear on the survey year after year. Table 3 includes a count of abandoned buildings by neighborhood in 2007 and the average number of years they have been listed as abandoned.

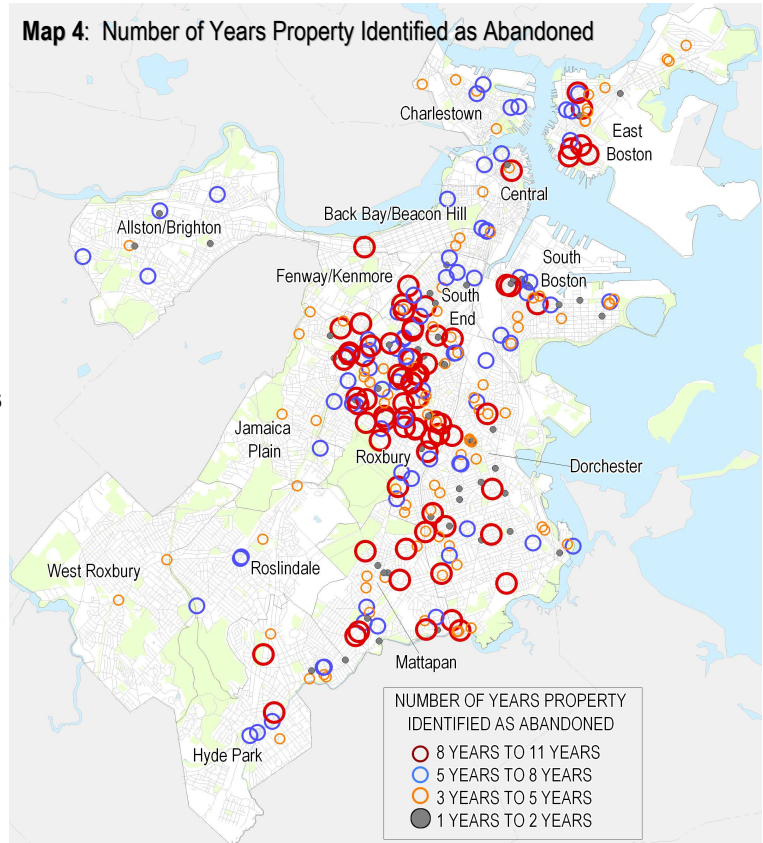
Fenway/Kenmore only has one abandoned building, and it has been on the list every year. For neighborhoods with 15 or more abandoned buildings, the most intractable abandonment can be found in Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, South End and East Boston. Map 4 shows ranges of years properties have been identified as abandoned since 1997.

Table 3: Average Number of Years Abandoned, 2007

Neighborhood	Total	Avg Yrs Aban
Allston/Brighton	8	3.4
Back Bay/Beacon Hill	1	7
Central	12	4.1
Charlestown	8	4.3
Dorchester	58	3.9
East Boston	22	5.6
Fenway/Kenmore	1	11
Hyde Park	13	4.8
Jamaica Plain	16	5.1
Mattapan	25	4.6
Roslindale	6	4.3
Roxbury	91	6.3
South Boston	29	3.6
South End	19	5.4
West Roxbury	1	3
TOTALS	310	5

**Table 4: Tax Arrearage
By Assessing
Land Use, 2007**

Map 4: Number of Years Property Identified as Abandoned



PROPERTIES IN TAX TITLE

Table 4 (below) is a breakdown of taxes owed. 57 of the 310 properties on this year's survey are held by private owners who are in tax arrears of approximately \$2.76 million. 20 commercial, mixed-use and industrial properties account for 72% of taxes owed. 37 residential properties comprised 28% of taxes owed.

Land Use	Sum of Taxes Due	Total Properties
COMMERCIAL PROPERTY	\$1,868,988	12
INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY	\$48,157	4
MIXED USE PROPERTY	\$72,560	4
APARTMENT PROPERTY	\$97,232	4
SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING	\$255,779	14
TWO-FAM DWELLING	\$99,175	6
THREE-FAM DWELLING	\$315,809	13
TOTAL	\$ 2,757,700	57



Trends 2007

Abandoned Buildings

CITY OF BOSTON/TOMAS M. MENINO, MAYOR

DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT EVELYN FRIEDMAN, CHIEF AND DIRECTOR

PRIVATE MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE

Private mortgage foreclosure was identified for a small percentage of the 2007 abandoned building inventory. Of the 310 properties, 32 properties or 10% had been petitioned (first step in foreclosure), 16 or 5% were foreclosed properties (the sale of a property at a foreclosure auction), and 6 or 2% are existing REO properties (properties bought back by foreclosing entity at auction) in the Fall of 2007.

However, in the past two years, the city has experienced a significant increase in private mortgage foreclosures overall. In 2007, there was a 75% increase in foreclosure petitions and a 169% increase in foreclosure deeds (see Table 5). Furthermore, the number of real-estate owned (REO) properties have also increased. As of 1/15/08, there were over 550 existing REO properties in the city (see Map 5).

Vacant REO properties pose a significant risk to neighborhoods by attracting crime and lowering local property values. Over time, these properties begin to deteriorate and show signs of physical distress adding to the City's abandoned building inventory and ultimately, destabilizing communities.

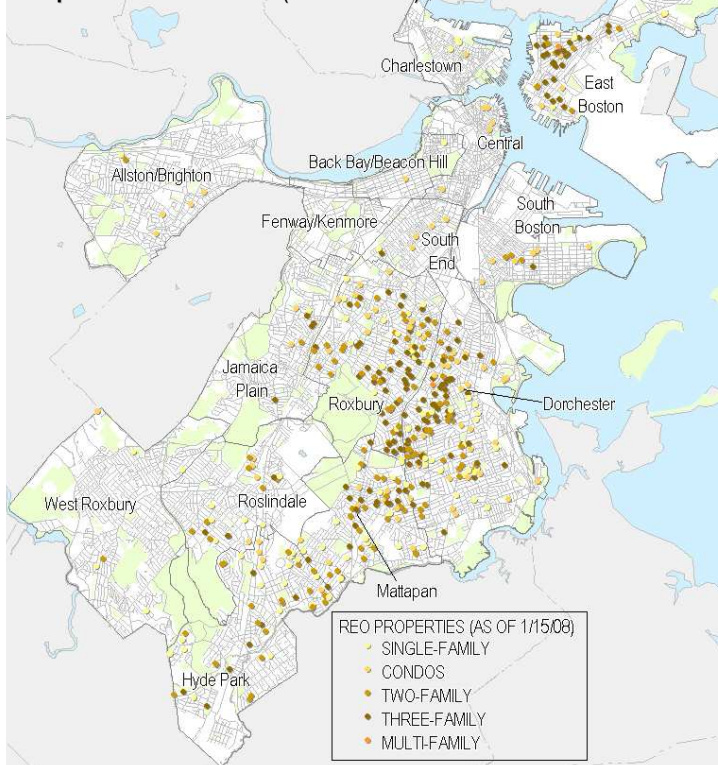
To immediately address this issue, Mayor Thomas Menino established the Foreclosure Intervention Team (FIT) in February of 2008 which is a multi-departmental team that addresses all issues that surround foreclosure and abandonment. Departments include: Boston Police, Inspectional Services, Neighborhood Development, Public Health Commission, Corporation Counsel, Public Works, Transportation, Office of Civil Rights, Property Management, Neighborhood Services, Rental Housing Resource Center, and the Boston Housing Authority.

Similar to the annual abandoned survey, as part of the FIT initiative, City staff have begun surveying REO properties and where appropriate identified problem areas and properties that require attention from one or more city departments. Of the 550 existing REO properties surveyed by March of 2008, City staff identified 92 properties as abandoned which will be added to the 2008 inventory.

Table 5: Foreclosure Activity, 2005 - 2007

YEAR	TOTAL PROPERTIES PETITIONED	TOTAL FORECLOSURE DEEDS	%CHANGE PETITIONS	%CHANGE F. DEEDS
2005	613	60	-	-
2006	1393	261	127%	335%
2007	2432	703	75%	127%

Map 5: EXISTING REOS (as of 1/15/08)



The Boston City Council has also taken steps to address issues related to private mortgage foreclosures and REO properties. In February of 2008, 'An Ordinance Regulating the Maintenance of Vacant, Foreclosing Residential Properties' was adopted. The ordinance will require property owners to register vacant and/or foreclosing residential properties with the City and identify a local individual or company to maintain vacant properties.



Trends 2007

Abandoned Buildings

CITY OF BOSTON/THOMAS M. MENINO, MAYOR

DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT EVELYN FRIEDMAN, CHIEF AND DIRECTOR

CITY ABANDONMENT STRATEGY

Since 1997, there has been a significant reduction in the number of abandoned buildings in Boston. For Leading the Way II (FY2004-FY2007), the City committed to maintaining the downward trend by setting a target of reclaiming 130 of the remaining 270 abandoned residential buildings and reducing residential abandonment by half. 217 residential buildings were renovated and there was a reduction in abandonment of 42%. The City exceeded the goal of reclaiming 130 properties but fell short of reducing abandonment by 50% due to newly abandoned buildings being added to the inventory from 2003-2007 (see Table 6).

Table 6: Residential Abandonment: Leading The Way II (FY03-FY07)

INVENTORY 2003	270
- Renovated 2004 - 2007	217
- Demolished 2004 - 2007	35
- Other Outcome 2004 - 2007	17
+ Newly Abandoned 2004 -2007	157
INVENTORY 2007	158

The City's multi-pronged abandonment strategy has been instrumental in reducing abandonment and meeting set goals. The strategy is implemented by DND and includes the following major components:

- The Abandoned Buildings survey and this Trends report are completed each year and examine the causes of abandonment, as well as, prioritize properties for action. In addition to the report, a list of privately-owned abandoned buildings is published on the City's website to encourage potential developers to contact the owners and purchase the property. Also, all private property owners included in the survey are contacted by DND to clarify the status of the building and offer advice or assistance with financing, renovation or marketing.
- DND's Homeowner Services, Office of Business Development and Neighborhood Housing Development divisions may provide funding, project management and technical assistance to eligible private building owners and developers to rehabilitate and redevelop abandoned buildings.

- DND's Real Estate Management division, through the Real Estate Disposition Initiative, uses requests for proposals to dispose of tax-foreclosed abandoned buildings. The City-owned inventory has been reduced by 58% since 1997 from 110 buildings to 47 buildings.
- Project Pride, a cooperative effort of DND, Inspectional Services and Sheriff's Department, combats illegal activity on City-owned and privately-owned abandoned properties by boarding and securing buildings. The costs are recovered by the City through a lien placed on the property.
- The newly established Foreclosure Intervention Team (FIT). Initiatives undertaken and anticipated by FIT include:
 - o Expedited City tax foreclosure takings
 - o Securing buildings, posting "No Trespassing" signs, removing graffiti, and increasing police surveillance
 - o Redevelopment plans to acquire and occupy REO properties
 - o Providing education and counseling to homeowners and tenants affected by foreclosure
 - o Identification of high-risk areas

Boston's Abandoned Housing Strategy was nationally recognized by the US Conference of Mayors (USCM) in 2006 as a "best practice". A summary of Boston's strategy was published in the USCM Mayor's Resource Guide on Vacant and Abandoned Property, which was released at the 74th Annual USCM Meeting.

In early 2007, DND was selected to participate in ESRI's National Vacant and Abandoned Properties Grant Program. The program awarded DND software, hardware and training to foster innovative approaches to solving community problems. With the grant, GIS applications and a GPS handheld device will be used to enhance field work during the annual abandoned buildings survey.

The Abandoned Buildings Trends Report is published by the Policy Development and Research division of the City of Boston Department of Neighborhood Development.

For more information about this publication, contact Ron Farrar at (617) 635-0340 or rfarrar.dnd@cityofboston.gov